

R E M A R K S

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-23 have been canceled, without prejudice, and new claims 24-28 have been added.

New independent claim 24 has been prepared to recite the feature of the present invention whereby the code detection section sets a second code detection area used to detect a latter part of the code that is narrower than a first code detection area used to detect a beginning part of the code, as supported by the disclosure in the specification at, for example, page 25, line 9 to page 26, line 12.

New claim 25 has been prepared to recite the features of the present invention originally recited in claim 7 whereby the non-interference area is set to be wider on one of an upper side and a lower side of the code, and whereby the code detection section starts detection of the code from the wider side of the non-interference area.

New claim 26 has been prepared to essentially recite the subject matter of original claim 8, depending from new claim 24.

New independent claim 27 has been prepared to essentially recite the subject matter of original claim 23, except that the

"such as" recitation of the types of images has been omitted from new claim 27.

And new claim 28 has been added to recite the types of images, depending from new claim 27.

No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that new claims 24-28 be approved and entered.

THE PRIOR ART REJECTIONS

Claim 1 was rejected under the judicially created obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 4 of Nagasaki et al (USP 5,896,403); claims 1, 7-12 and 18-23 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious in view of Nagasaki et al; and claims 2-6 and 13-17 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious in view of the combination of Nagasaki et al and Kovach et al (USP 5,105,073). These rejections, however, are respectfully traversed with respect to new claims 24-28.

According to the present invention as recited in new independent claim 24, a code reader is provided which comprises: an image pickup section configured to pick up a code recorded on a card-shaped recording medium; a slit guide section configured to specify a positional relationship between the image pickup section and the code, and to serve as a guide for the recording

medium when the recording medium is inserted into the slit guide section and moved in a side direction; a code detection section configured to set a code detection area in an image pickup screen obtained by the image pickup section, and to detect at least part of the code from inside of the code detection area; and a restoration section configured to specify the code from the image pickup screen based on a detection position of said at least part of the code detected by the code detection section, and to restore the data recorded in the code. In addition, according to the present invention as recited in new claim 24, the code detection section sets a second code detection area used to detect a latter part of the code that is narrower than a first code detection area used to detect a beginning part of the code as the recording medium is moved.

Thus, according to the present invention as recited in new independent claim 24, the slit guide section is provided so as to specify the positional relationship between the image pickup section and the code, and the code detection section sets a second code detection area used to detect the latter part of the code that is narrower than a first code detection area used to detect the beginning part of the code when the card-shaped data recording medium is inserted into the slit guide section and the recording medium is moved in a side direction.

Due to the above-described structural features, the code reader according to the present invention recited in new claim 24 can exhibit an advantageous effect as follows. That is, the positional relationship between the image pickup section and the code is defined by the guide section, and therefore great displacement of the image pickup section for the code is voided by the guide section. As a result, once part of the code is detected by the code detection portion in a first code detection area, the second code detection area can be set narrower than the first code detection area in the code detection process, thereby making it possible to carry out the code reading process at a higher rate and to reduce the required memory capacity.

By contrast, Nagasaki et al merely discloses the basic structural features of a coder reader wherein: (1) an optically readable code is recorded on a card-type recording medium (dot code 1096 recorded along a side on a printing paper sheet shown in Fig. 111); (2) the code comprises a plurality of blocks each including a data area containing divided data pieces, a marker region containing a marker, and a block ID area which are arranged according to a specified position relationship; (3) a code detection section detects at least part of the code which comprises the marker; and (4) a restoration section specifies the code from an image pickup screen in units of blocks and restores the divided data pieces.

In addition, Kovach et al merely discloses a credit card reader having an expansion portion consisting of guide portions 42 and 44, wherein alignment of a credit card is conducted by the guide portions 42 and 44 for reading of the credit card.

It is respectfully submitted, however, that neither Nagasaki et al nor Kovach et al discloses, teaches or suggests the above described claimed feature of the present invention as recited in new claim 24 whereby the code detection section sets a second code detection area used to detect a latter part of the code that is narrower than a first code detection area used to detect a beginning part of the code.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the double patenting rejection is clearly overcome, and that even if the teachings of Nagasaki et al and Kovach et al were combinable in the manner suggested by the Examiner the structure of the claimed present invention and the advantageous effects thereof would still not be achieved or rendered obvious.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that the present invention as recited in new independent claim 24 and new claims 25-26 depending therefrom patentably distinguishes over Nagasaki et al and Kovach et al, taken singly or in combination, under 35 USC 103.

With respect to new independent claim 27, moreover, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner failed to point out any teaching in Nagasaki et al of the features recited in original claim 23 now recited in new claim 27. And it is respectfully submitted that Nagasaki et al indeed fails to disclose, teach or suggest the features of the present invention recited in new claim 27. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that new claim 27 and new claim 28 depending therefrom also patentably distinguish over the cited references.

RE: PRIORITY CLAIM

At the top of page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner acknowledged Applicants' claim for priority under 35 USC 119. However, on page 1 of the Office Action, the Examiner did not acknowledge receipt of the certified priority document which was filed with the original application papers on February 28, 2002. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner acknowledge receipt of the certified priority document in the next Patent Office communication.

RE: INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

In item 2 on page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner stated that the citations of related application Serial

No. 09/655,348 have been "crossed out" (from the Information Disclosure Statement filed February 28, 2002). It is respectfully submitted, however, that the Examiner should not have crossed out the citation of related application Serial No. 09/655,348 itself since a copy of the related application was filed with said Information Disclosure Statement. In this connection, it is respectfully pointed out that it is irrelevant that related Serial No. 09/655,348 is unpublished. The Examiner is referred to the MPEP on this point.

Attached is another copy of the form PTO/SB/08B (originally filed February 28, 2002) listing related application Serial No. 09/655,348. A copy of this related application was filed with the Information Disclosure Statement of February 28, 2002. And it is respectfully requested that the Examiner initial the attached form PTO/SB/08B to confirm that related application Serial No. 09/655,348 has been considered by the Examiner and made "of record".

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In view of the foregoing, entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number given below for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,



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